



INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE INCLUSION POLICY

Related Policies

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme and Middle Years Assessment
Gifted and Talented
Indigenous Students

Merici College Mission Statement

Merici College empowers women to love life, have hope, be faithful and build futures more wondrous than they dare to dream.

Merici College Vision Statement

Merici College endeavours to be a vibrant, faithful learning community that fosters excellence, and takes positive action to build a shared global future.

Purpose /Rationale

- The purpose of this document is to:
- Communicate to all stakeholders in our IB Merici College community the expectations for creating and maintaining an inclusive learning environment for all
- Provide clear guidelines to all stakeholders by defining appropriate vision, goals, and practice in the context of the IB Diploma and Middle Years Programme at Merici College
- Establish the responsibilities of all stakeholders related to inclusivity at Merici College
- Outline and communicate the various accommodations and support opportunities that are available to students and teachers in line with IB guidelines and procedures.

Definitions

Assessment Access Requirements

A candidate with assessment access requirements is one who requires access arrangements in assessment conditions to demonstrate her level of achievement.

Accommodation

A generic term comprising all forms of arrangement, compensation or conditions that may be allowed for a candidate¹.

Adverse Circumstances²

Circumstances beyond the control of the candidate(s) that might be detrimental to the performance of the candidate(s) in one or more assessment components (for example bereavement, natural disasters, civil unrest). Adverse circumstances do not include medical conditions or disability.

Disability

The definition of disability in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 is as broad as possible. It includes: physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological, learning disabilities, physical disfigurement, and the presence in the body of disease-causing organisms³.

Gifted and Talented

Gifted students are those whose potential is distinctly above average in one or more of the following domains of human ability: intellectual, creative, social and physical. Talented students are those whose skills are distinctly above average in one or more areas of human performance. Talent emerges from giftedness through a complex developmental process and via several influences, including the teaching and learning opportunities⁴.

Imputed Disability

An imputed disability is one that a person believes another person has and the school team has reasonable grounds to make such a judgement. This means that there is not a formal diagnosis by a medical professional or an allied health professional (psychologist, speech therapist, occupational therapist) held by the school⁵.

Inclusion

Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers⁶.

¹ IBO, (2016) *Learning diversity and inclusion in IB Programmes*. The Hague. IBO.

² IBO, (2016) *Learning diversity and inclusion in IB Programmes*. The Hague. IBO.

³ Australian Government, (1992) *Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)*.

⁴ Australian Curriculum, (n.d) *Gifted and Talented Students*, [online] Available at: <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/student-diversity/gifted-and-talented-students/> [Accessed 21 Sept. 2018]

⁵ Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD), (n.d) *Quick Guide* [online] Available at: http://www.schooldisabilitydatap1.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/quick_guide.pdf. [Accessed 19 Sept. 2018]

⁶ IBO, (2016) *Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes*. The Hague. IBO

Inclusive Assessment Arrangements

Changed or additional conditions during the assessment process for a candidate with assessment access requirements. These enable the candidate to demonstrate his or her level of attainment more fairly and are not intended to compensate for any lack of ability.

Learning Support Requirements

Support and/or access required to enable some students, who have the aptitude to meet all curriculum and assessment requirements, to reach their full potential in learning and assessment.

Nationally Consistent Collection of Data of school students with disability (NCCD)

The NCCD collects information about Australian school students who receive an adjustment to address disability. For the student to be included in the NCCD, the school should have evidence that ongoing, long-term adjustments have been provided for a minimum period of 10 weeks of school education (excluding school holiday periods), in the 12 months preceding the national data collection. Students with disability receive reasonable adjustments to access education, consistent with the definitions and obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards)

Reasonable Adjustments

Changes or additional conditions to the assessment process which may not be standard and not covered in the list of inclusive assessment arrangements. They are unique to a student based on their requirements⁷.

The HuB

The College has established the Merici HuB where students can be booked in to receive help and support particularly in developing organisation and research skills, managing assessment tasks and with concepts studied in class. Students work independently or with additional assistance from our Learning Support Assistants and teachers. These arrangements can be short or longer term.

Vision for Inclusion

Merici College fosters an affirmative culture of learning that supports all students and teachers, wherever they may be on their educational journey. It is a culture that recognises the gifts of each person and is a safe place for discussion and self-expression. At its core, inclusivity is a belief that everyone can learn.

⁷ IBO, (2018). *Access and Inclusion Policy*. Cardiff. IBO

As teachers, fostering a joy of learning is achieved by differentiating learning and utilising supportive learning applications. The Merici College Principles of Powerful Learning⁸ explicitly highlight 'Inclusive' as one of the four tiers of the Powerful Learning diagram.

Merici College values integrate fully with its core beliefs and goals for learning. We believe in the innate dignity of every person and seek to have all our relationships reflect the love of God as witnessed through the person of Jesus Christ. Each student is viewed as an individual with unique gifts. Merici College values the personal knowledge and culture that all people in its community bring to enrich the College community.

All students, appropriately challenged, can achieve success, and extend their level of knowledge and understanding. Learning and teaching at Merici College is designed to achieve excellence in education for all students in line with our Merici Vision and Mission.

Staff at Merici College use a variety of strategies to meet individual student needs. Embedded in these strategies are the beliefs that students learn best when they own their learning, enabling critical thinking and reflection. In support of such an approach Merici College concentrates on several key pedagogies:

- Differentiation and Inclusivity
- High Impact Teaching Strategies
- Collaborative Teaching
- Integrated ICT

Inclusive learning at Merici College aims to identify and remove barriers to learning to increase access and engagement for all students. An ongoing process of reflection and evaluation to create dynamic pedagogical excellence and improve student outcomes is facilitated. Merici College supports multilingualism and learning diversity, recognising that students and staff all have their own learning journey, and this journey is supported through the attributes of the IB Learner Profile.

Merici College supports the IBO definition of inclusion that:

"inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers."⁹

Merici College is committed to offering an inclusive education to all students who are willing to support the philosophy, values and aims of Catholic schooling¹⁰.

⁸ Merici College, (2022) *Teaching and Learning Core Document*. ACT.

⁹ IBO, (2016) *Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes*. The Hague. IBO

¹⁰ Catholic Education, (2018). *Parents Enrolments*, <https://cg.catholic.edu.au/parents/enrolment/>

Students with disabilities are identified and supported in Archdiocesan schools according to the understandings and procedures outlined in this policy. All school processes and practices are to be informed by relevant disability legislation: Disability Discrimination Act 1992, the Disability Standards for Education 2005 and the IB requirements and standards. Archdiocesan schools engage with the vision of inclusive practices as defined in the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan as well as actively and systematically promote inclusive practices in their community according to the mission and vision of the Catholic Education Office¹¹.

Across Australia, all schools are required to make reasonable adjustments for students with disability at the time of their enrolment and during their education, ensuring they have the support they need to successfully access and participate in the school curriculum, programs and activities on the same basis as their peers.

Students with intellectual disabilities/learning disabilities in the Junior School (Years 7-10) access the curriculum at the year level of their cohort, but the learning outcomes are selected from a year level that best suits their individual learning needs. This allows class teachers to adjust the classroom learning in a way that allows inclusion of all students, while supporting students with additional needs with personalised class tasks and assessment tasks.

As an IB DP school, Merici College supports the IB philosophy that all candidates should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible. Where standard assessment conditions could put a candidate with special educational needs at a disadvantage by preventing her from demonstrating her level of attainment, special arrangements may be authorized. This policy applies to candidates affected by a temporary, long-term or permanent disability or illness, including candidates with a learning difficulty¹².

This policy supports all the inclusive assessment arrangements that may be authorized by the IB based on the IB Principles of Inclusive Assessment and the IB Standards Relating to Inclusive Education¹³.

- Student support 2: The school identifies and provides appropriate learning support. (0202-02)
- Student support 3: The school fosters the social, emotional, and physical well-being of its students and teachers. (0202-03)
- Culture 1: The school secures access to an IB education for the broadest possible range of students. (0301-01)
- Culture 2: The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews an inclusion policy that creates cultures that support all students to reach their full potential. (0301-02)

¹¹ Catholic Education Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, (2011). *Students with Disabilities – Identification and Support* [online] <file:///C:/Users/connam/Downloads/Students-with-Special-Needs-Disabilities-Identification-and-Support-Policy.pdf> Accessed [16 Sept 2018].

¹² IBO, (2018). *Access and Inclusion Policy*. Cardiff. IBO.

¹³ IBO, (2022) *Programme standards and practices*, Cardiff. IBO.

Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Inclusion

Merici College welcomes people from all cultures who are willing to support the philosophy, values and aims of Catholic schooling¹⁴. Merici College strives to promote the implementation of culturally appropriate programs to assist the provision of curricula that are inclusive of Indigenous perspectives and encourages the enrolment and participation of Indigenous students through the development of welcoming and supportive environments for Indigenous students and their families. The Catholic Education Archdiocese Canberra Goulburn Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy¹⁵ and the International Baccalaureate *Languages Policy*¹⁶ set out the ways we promote international mindedness and inclusion.

Language and Inclusion

As an inclusive learning environment, Merici College supports, celebrates and respects the learning of languages and cultural heritage. The curriculum at Merici College supports English as the language of instruction and supports those students for whom English is not their best, or first language.

All students attending Merici College in Years 7-10 will study an additional language to English in line with IB policies.

It is a condition of enrolment that the parents of a child with specific needs advise the College at the time the application for enrolment is made. Parents and guardians will be asked to provide permission for enquiries to be made, in line with relevant privacy provisions, which will allow the College to assess the child's needs adequately.

Before finalising an enrolment, interviews are held to ensure that enrolment at the College would be appropriate for the student. These decisions are made on an individual basis and after careful consultation with the family and Catholic Education. Merici College welcomes applications from those not of the Catholic faith if there are places available, on the understanding that all students will support the religious ethos of the College and will participate in Religious Education lessons, liturgical celebrations and retreats where appropriate.

All Senior students, whether completing the ACT BSSS Senior Secondary Certificate or applying to study the IB Diploma Programme, will be provided with course counselling at the admissions stage. This will assist with choosing the appropriate course package and pathway. Students applying to enter the IB Diploma Programme will be required to demonstrate resilience and dedication to their studies through an interview with the IB Diploma Coordinator, VET & Careers Education Coordinator and Deputy Principal Teaching and Learning as required in the course counselling process.

¹⁴ Catholic Education, (2018). *Parents Enrolments*, <https://cg.catholic.edu.au/parents/enrolment/>

¹⁵ Catholic Education, (2021). *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy*.

¹⁶ Merici College. (2022). *International Baccalaureate Languages Policy*. Canberra. ACT.

Procedures

Any person in the school community can request support in assisting to identify and remove barriers to learning. Merici College has several procedures in place to increase access and engagement in learning for all students. Inclusive Education is a team of education specialists who support students, families, and staff to identify and remove barriers to learning. If a student is considered to require additional support with their learning, the Inclusive Education team may provide: guidance, testing and referral for testing, and, for students with identified substantial and extensive levels of adjustment, one to one support.

Gifted and Talented and Academic Extension

Gagné's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (2008) provides research-based definitions of giftedness and talent that are directly and logically connected to teaching and learning.

According to Gagné, gifted students are those whose potential is distinctly above average in one or more of the following domains of human ability: intellectual, creative, social and physical. Talented students are those whose skills are distinctly above average in one or more areas of human performance. Talent emerges from giftedness through a complex developmental process and via a number of influences, including the teaching and learning opportunities¹⁷.

Students who are gifted and talented have their needs supported through the differentiation of the curriculum. Extension opportunities are available in English and Mathematics courses (fast-paced English, 9A and 10A Maths, fast-paced Science) and students are encouraged to take part in the extensive range of extracurricular activities such as Da Vinci Decathlon, The ACT Debating Competition, various English writing competitions, as well as Mathematics and Science competitions. As part of the Religious Education curriculum Merici College supports inclusivity in the wider community through its partnership with Black Mountain school where students engage with voluntary service to support students with disability.

Students entering Merici College in Year 7 will complete testing which reveals student's aptitude in three areas: quantitative, verbal and non-verbal reasoning. Nominated students from other year groups may be tested upon request from either teachers or parents. Students who are identified as gifted will be managed on a case by case basis. Merici College's *Gifted and Talented Policy* outlines the process for identification and adjustment for gifted students. Adjustments made may include: subject, whole grade or radical acceleration. Students identified as highly gifted will be placed on a Personalised Plan as significant adjustments will be required to one or more of their subject areas.

¹⁷ Australian Curriculum, (n.d) *Gifted and Talented Students*, [online] Available at: <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/student-diversity/gifted-and-talented-students/> [Accessed 21 Sept]

Accommodations and Inclusive Assessment Arrangements

A Personalised Plan (PP) is developed for each student found eligible for Learning Support services. Accommodations and inclusive arrangements for a student with an PP may include, but are not limited to: additional time, rest period, access to ICT, scribe, reader, communicator and prompter. All the accommodations will be aligned with the IB, as mentioned in the document for candidates with special assessment needs studying an IB programme at Merici College.

The Middle Years Assessment Procedures handbook and *Diploma Programme Assessment Procedures* handbook will detail the standardised access arrangements for candidates with higher incidence learning support requirements, including dyslexia, vision impairments, hearing impairments, information processing challenges and physical challenges.

MYP students on Personalised Plans with diagnosed learning disabilities that have the “cognitive ability” to complete the programme have accommodations provided to ensure equitable access to their courses. These accommodations are in line with their respective Personalised Plans which are made available to staff and reviewed and updated in consultation with parents and staff.

MYP students who are studying a ‘modified programme’ will have assessment outcomes and criteria written for them on an individual basis, using age-appropriate outcomes e.g. Year 1 outcomes for a Year 5 student or where necessary Primary Years Programme or ACARA Achievement Standards outcomes to help modify language for summative assessment. These candidates will be eligible to receive the Merici College Record of Participation, not the Merici College MYP Certificate.

Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are changes or additional conditions to the assessment process which may not be covered in the standard list of inclusive access arrangements. They are unique to a candidate based on their requirements.

The decision on the most appropriate reasonable adjustment will be made by the IB after engaging in discussions with the school.

The IB will only authorise reasonable adjustments where no other inclusive access arrangement can be applied to meet the purpose.

MYP

For the MYP reasonable adjustments can only be applied to the Personal Project (e-assessments not performed at Merici College so not applicable). Schools must consult with the IB before planning any reasonable adjustments for a candidate.

DP

The Head of IB is responsible for liaising with the IB to request reasonable adjustment permissions in line with the DP policies and procedures.

Identification of Students with Disability

At Merici College, as part of the Archdiocese of Canberra Goulbourn, students with a disability are identified according to Australian Government criteria as determined at state/territory level¹⁸. In this Archdiocese, students meeting Australian Government criteria for disability status are referred to as Students with Disability¹⁹.

Categories of Disability	Criteria validated by relevant professional
1. Cognition (Intellectual)	Full scale score on a standardised, restricted psychometric (IQ) assessment at or below the second percentile and accompanied by associated academic and adaptive behavioural delays.
2. Sensory (Hearing)	Permanent (sensori-neural/conductive) hearing loss of 30+ decibels with resultant communication difficulties.
3. Sensory (Visual)	Permanent vision loss of 6/24 or less in the better eye corrected, or less than 20 degrees field of vision.
4. Physical	Ongoing physical condition (e.g. cerebral palsy, osteogenesis imperfecta, spina bifida) that significantly limits functioning and independence in – mobility, personal care and undertaking essential learning tasks.
5. Mental Health (Social/Emotional)	Mental health problems at a level of frequency, duration and intensity that seriously affects educational functioning – behaviours must be evident in home, school and community environments (A diagnosis of ADD (with or without hyperactivity) is not included).
6. PDD	Diagnosis indicating a pervasive developmental disorder (e.g. Autism) affecting verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction that significantly affects the ability to learn. Diagnosis must also include a clinically significant adaptive behavioural delay.
7. Language Disorder	Expressive and/or receptive language disorder with a scaled score of 70 or less on a restricted, standardised speech pathology assessment (i.e. the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals (CELF)).
8. Chronic Medical	Chronic medical condition that affects functioning and/or independence where a student is highly dependent on others to access learning.

Where students have been identified as having a disability, educational adjustments are made for students to enable them to access the curriculum, achieve curriculum outcomes and participate in school life.

The Merici College Inclusive Education team can use or access results from a variety of assessment and diagnostic tools to assist with identifying students with additional learning needs.

¹⁸ Merici College (2017) *Student with a Disability – Identification and Support*. Canberra. Merici College. ACT.

¹⁹ Catholic Education Canberra Goulbourn (2021) *Supporting students with additional needs Policy*. ACT.

These tests and data sources may include but not limited to:

- York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (YARC, Australian Edition)
- NAPLAN Data
- Psychologist Reports
- Teacher Evidence from Classwork
- PAT testing

Teaching staff at Merici College are responsible for completing their mandatory SALT (Self-Administered Legal Training) and being aware of the Disability Standards to stay current with local and national requirements.

Responsibilities

The Inclusive Education Coordinator (IEC) is responsible for supporting staff and students to ensure the identification and removal of barriers to learning and promoting the value of inclusive education in the College and wider community. The Head of IB is responsible for liaising with the Inclusive Education Coordinator to ensure that all students and staff are supported in meeting the IB inclusive education requirements. The IEC and Enrolment Officer will oversee a smooth transition for students entering and leaving the College so that information about inclusive education and students with additional learning needs is shared as appropriate between the schools involved.

It is the responsibility of every teacher as a teacher of *all* students, to make sure that each student is exposed to teaching and learning that reaches them as individual learners.²⁴ It is also teachers' responsibility to comply with ACT, National and Archdiocesan legislation and guidelines relating to inclusive education and this includes the storage and sharing of student data and confidential information.

Upon enrolment at Merici College, it is the responsibility of the parents or guardians to supply the school with evidence including assessment reports to confirm their child's eligibility if identifying their child as having a disability.

It is the responsibility of the Merici College leadership team to work with educators, specialists, parents, students and all stakeholders to put processes in place to remove barriers to learning for every member of the College community.

References

- Australian Curriculum, (n.d) *Gifted and Talented Students*, [online] Available at: <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/student-diversity/gifted-and-talented-students/> [Accessed 21 Sept. 2018]
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Merici College (2017) *Student with a Disability – Identification and Support*. Canberra. Merici College. ACT.

Forms

Application to Enrol in an Archdiocesan Catholic School and Catholic Schools Enrolment Information Pack at <http://cg.catholic.edu.au/parents/enrolment/>

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